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ABSTRACT

This issue discusses the importance of the community college to higher education in the United States. Contained are six articles: (1) "America's Community Colleges: On the Ascent," by Arthur M. Cohen, which places the strengths and challenges of the American community college within a historical context; (2) "Lamps Beside the Golden Door," by Evelyn Clements, which analyzes the lifelong learning opportunities of the community college; (3) "The Global Linkage," by Michael J. Bandler, which examines the international impact of community colleges, both as models for institutions abroad, and as destination institutions for foreign students; (4) "The Case for the Community College Baccalaureate Degree," by Kenneth P. Walker, which discusses how the two-year certificate might be meshed with the four-year programs of the nation's colleges and universities; (5) "From Classroom to Workplace: Ties that Bind," by Michael J. Bandler, which analyzes the role of workplace development in the American community college system; and (6) "Launching Pads for Life," by Tracey Wong Briggs, which looks at the recent winners of a USA Today annual recognition program. The winners reflect the diverse community college population. (Contains 38 references.) (NB)

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Community Colleges in the United States

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JUNE 2002

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A MESSAGE

ROD PAIGE

SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

From the earliest moments of the American Republic, education has stood out as a core democratic ideal. For it is through learning, new experiences and the knowledge gained from them that the nation continues to evolve.

What does education represent? At the beginning of the process, it opens children's eyes to the world around them. As First Lady Laura Bush has noted, "it gives our children the tools they need to succeed in today's global economy." Moreover, she adds, it "fuels growth, because it unleashes individual creativity and provides the skilled work force essential to growth and development."

In the United States, universal elementary and secondary education enhances and enriches society as a whole. Higher education, too, is part of the daily experience for millions of men and women, as they stride towards vocational, technical, business, professional and intellectual careers.

Within higher education, the community college system of two-year programs is taking on a greater significance as time goes on. A century after the movement's creation with the establishment of Joliet (Illinois) Junior College, these schools are pivotal in workforce development, continuing education and the expansion of civic communal responsibility on a local level.

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act into law, closing a successful year of bipartisan cooperation in the U.S. Congress and opening a new era in American education. Under this new law, we will strive to provide every young person in America with a high-quality education – regardless of his or her income, ability or background.

This will have a decided impact on community colleges. Reaching out extensively to America's expanding ethnic population, they prepare their students to live and work in a global setting, and, moreover, are havens for young adults from abroad seeking to find their niche in higher education in the United States.

When Tooch Van, Cambodian-born, addressed graduates of Middlesex Community College in Massachusetts, he was far from the ordinary speaker at commencement exercises. Indeed, for the celebrants, he was an uncommon symbol – a one-time refugee who began in the two-year higher education program, then transferred to a four-year school. Today, he is about to enter a graduate program for future diplomats, at a prestigious American university. Someday, he will return to his native land – an exemplar of American education in general, and the community college system in particular.

As these schools continue to grow, clearly their value to our citizens – and to the citizens of the world – will increase. ■

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Community Colleges in the United States

JUNE 2002

CONTENTS

2
A MESSAGE
ROD PAIGE
How do community colleges reflect American values? This introductory essay by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education introduces the discussion of two-year colleges that comprises this Journal.

5
AMERICA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES: ON THE ASCENT
BY ARTHUR M. COHEN
The author, a professor of higher education at the University of California at Los Angeles and author of the leading study on community colleges, presents an overview of the state of the two-year institutions within the historical context, setting out their strengths and challenges and how they achieved the level they enjoy today.

9
LAMPS BESIDE THE GOLDEN DOOR
BY EVELYN CLEMENTS
Community colleges, with their easy access, job skills programs and diverse student bodies, offer many benefits – not the least of which are lifelong learning opportunities. This article by a vice president of a community college in Massachusetts gives examples of these opportunities.

11
THE GLOBAL LINKAGE: A CONVERSATION WITH JAMES McKENNEY
BY MICHAEL J. BANDLER
In this interview, the vice president for economic development and international programs of the American Association of Community Colleges surveys the international impact of U.S. community colleges. The conversation describes the two-pronged approach – serving both those who come in increasing numbers to the United States to pursue the two-year curriculum, and those educational institutions abroad that seek to transplant the U.S. community college model onto their soils.

15
THE CASE FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE
BY KENNETH P. WALKER
In this article, the author, president of a leading Florida community college, discusses how the two-year certificate might be meshed with the four-year programs of the nation's colleges and universities, the result not only of demand, but also of shared interests and goals.

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18
FROM CLASSROOM TO WORKPLACE: TIES THAT BIND
BY MICHAEL J. BANDLER
Workplace development is one of the primary missions of America's community college system. Success depends on cooperation among the schools, the corporate/business sector and the local and regional jurisdictions. Case studies show this facilitation, and the vision, is succeeding.

21
LAUNCHING PADS FOR LIFE
BY TRACEY WONG BRIGGS
A recent announcement by the publication *USA TODAY* of its selections as winners of its annual recognition program reveals a diverse group that reflects, in microcosm, the community college population today.

23
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND INTERNET SITES

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

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AMERICA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES: ON THE ASCENT

By
Arthur M. Cohen

Across the spectrum that is higher education in the United States, the community college system is of comparatively recent vintage – fundamentally a phenomenon that surfaced, developed and expanded over the course of the past century.

Originally, this two-year program was designed to accommodate the rising number of secondary school graduates who sought to further their education but, for one reason or another – time, funds, family obligations or capability – could not enroll in a standard four-year college or university.

Since those early years, community colleges have expanded their role beyond the two years of pre-baccalaureate study. Today, they prepare people for the workforce and offer a variety of services to local communities. They assist people to grow within their careers. Moreover, they offer basic literacy instruction for people who failed to fully learn rudimentary skills in primary and secondary education, as well as for new immigrants to the United States. Finally, they maintain courses for the personal interest of adults – fostering the spirit of lifelong learning.

Indeed, the general principle underlying community college development has been a belief in individual mobility and achievement – the belief that anyone seeking it should be given the opportunity to learn in order to advance professionally or personally in society, notwithstanding their prior educational accomplishments or their social or economic status. Because community colleges place few barriers to students' admission, and because their tuition fees are lower than those of four-year colleges and universities, they offer an open access, a readily available opportunity for one and all to find something of value.

By definition, the community college is an institution accredited to award an associate degree as its highest diploma. Typically granted after two years of collegiate-level instruction, it qualifies the recipient to enter a university at the junior, or third-year level, or to enter the workforce as a qualified employee in numerous occupational and paraprofessional fields. At present, there are 1,075 community colleges in the United States, enrolling 5.5 million students.

Their merit has been proven in many ways, not least in the manner in which they have accommodated periodic increases in the number of young people seeking entry to college. For example,

in 1979 there were 4.3 million 17-year-olds in the United States, an increase of 50 percent in 15 years. More than 70 percent of these 17-year-olds had graduated high school and nearly half of them sought entry to college. This put enormous pressure on college admissions, one that the universities were not prepared to accommodate but which the community colleges could, and did, absorb. In 2000, nearly half of all those who began college for the first time did so at community colleges.

Invariably, community college students have diverse goals. One-third of them seek skills and certificates that qualify them for employment. Nearly 20 percent want to upgrade themselves in jobs they already hold, and 10 percent are attending strictly for their general personal interest. An additional one-third want to earn credits that would be transferred to a four-year school towards a bachelor's degree.

This is significant: Few other educational systems around the world allow students to transfer credits readily from one institution to another. Elsewhere as well, the functions that American community colleges provide are divided among different types of institutions. Japan, for example, has separate junior colleges, special training schools and technical colleges in its postsecondary mix. Only the U.S. community colleges provide pre-baccalaureate education, short-term vocational training, adult education, and job entry and professional upgrading in technology, health professions and other occupations, all under one roof.

This blend of purposes has given rise to a comprehensive institution in which two-thirds of the students attend part-time. Few of these colleges have residence halls; most students commute, enroll in one or two classes, then return to their jobs or other pursuits. The median age on campus is 25; in several states – Arizona, California, Washington and Wyoming – 8 percent or more of the population aged 18 or older is enrolled.

Well over a half-million associate degrees are awarded by community colleges annually, one-third of them for liberal arts or general studies. Most recipients intend to matriculate at senior institutions. The remainder go to students in occupational fields, one-fourth of them in the health professions – nursing, dental assistance, medical lab technician training and related fields. Business professions – including secretarial services, business administration, accounting and small-business management – account for an additional 25 percent of the associate degree awards. Each year, community colleges also award certificates for programs of less than two years to more than 100,000 students who complete short-term programs in repair or protective services, transportation, computer and information sciences, precision production trades and real estate or construction licensing. More than half the colleges offer English as a Second Language (ESL) training for recent immigrants.

Most of the instructors or professors at community colleges have master of arts degrees as their highest achievement. Two-thirds of the faculty teach only one or two classes per term. Most part-timers are recent college graduates seeking full-time teaching positions, people with regular employment elsewhere or retirees wishing to maintain a tie to education. The community colleges are financed from a combination of sources, including state (44 percent) and local appropriations (below 20 percent) and student fees (21 percent), with most of the rest coming from the U.S. Government and auxiliary enterprises.

Because community colleges have never enjoyed sizable donations from alumni or from philanthropic foundations, they have very small endowments, as a rule. Accordingly, they have sought other ways of supplementing revenue. Most have established college foundations and have engaged in campaigns to raise funds from businesses and individuals in their local communities. But these have yet to yield more than minuscule proportions of the revenue they need. The colleges have gained some funds through sales and services, particularly by renting their facilities for local groups to use during off-hours. Some have leased land on a long-term basis to developers for construction of assisted-living facilities or shopping centers.

One lucrative alternative funding source has been contract training with industry and public agencies. By these arrangements, colleges provide staff and facilities to train local police, firefighters and county and municipal employees. Or they may contract to train employees of local industries in the latest workplace techniques; training sessions take place either on campus or at the industry's own facilities.

Positioned as they are between secondary school and baccalaureate education, the community colleges have developed collaborative ventures with institutions on either side. They attempt to smooth the road toward higher learning for graduates of secondary school lacking requisite funds or skills. They do so by meshing their programs with those of universities so that students taking community college courses can transfer credits without any shortfall, and by helping ensure that secondary school courses will prepare students for college. Community colleges also collaborate with public health services by hosting "health fairs" and other activities aimed at helping people gain access to health care. Furthermore, the two-year institutions train tutors to work in the elementary schools and help students learn basic reading, writing and arithmetic. And they help community welfare agencies by providing the most basic training in grooming and job skills for the chronically unemployed.

Evidence of the success of these efforts abounds, beginning with the rates at which two-year college alumni gain jobs or pass licensing exams, and the rates of transfer to four-year schools. Nearly all students graduating with a degree or certificate in the health professions gain employment. Alumni who must take state licensing exams in fields such as nursing, dental hygiene and respiration therapy pass those tests at rates significantly higher than those of students who have come through proprietary or commercial schools. Community college students who transfer to four-year institutions achieve baccalaureate degrees roughly equal to those students who entered those institutions as freshmen.

There are outcomes less measurable with pinpoint precision – the degree to which communities' standards of living rise because of community colleges' health and welfare activities; the manner in which immigrants integrate themselves into society through language training and acculturation gained at community colleges; the means by which community college graduates become entrepreneurs through the courses they've taken in business law, small business accounting and employee relations; and the support community colleges render the local economy, in tandem with state economic development agencies, by offering to train workers so as to attract industry.

Most of the colleges are inexorably linked with international education. They enroll students from abroad, sponsor study-abroad programs for American students and conduct overseas study tours. Some maintain international business centers, training programs for local businesses wishing to engage in international trade, or contract training with companies based in other countries.

Overall, the United States has profited mightily from the flexibility embedded in the community college system, which meets such changing conditions as the demographic expansion and contraction. Today, when 85 to 90 percent of those entering four-year colleges are ages 19 or younger, only 61 percent of community college students are in that age range.

Then, too, community colleges are adapting to shifting needs in the workplace. During the first half of the 20th century, when a year or two of college was sufficient preparation to teach primary school students, two-year institutions were heavily involved in teacher training. In the post-World War II era, however, when prospective teachers were expected to have four-year baccalaureate degrees and even master of education certification, community college teacher training programs were dissolved. Yet recently, in response to America's general teacher shortage, many community colleges have reestablished teacher training programs – this time, though, in cooperation with neighboring four-year baccalaureate-granting institutions. In these instances, community colleges provide the first two years of the full course.

Community colleges also are active in the health professions. They train a significant portion of licensed vocational nurses, x-ray technicians, medical records keepers and other support personnel. They also prepare students for employment as security guards, probation officers and other staff work in prisons. The two-year colleges also respond to workforce needs for a particular locale. A school in a resort area might have programs in restaurant and hotel management and in the culinary arts. And overall, across the spectrum of their activities, community colleges are part of the U.S. national effort to move people from welfare to work.

As the 21st century takes hold, community

colleges do face a number of challenges and unanswered questions.

First of all, there is an increasing need for these schools to create year-round operations. The U.S. population of 18-year-olds has risen dramatically, and will continue to do so – from a low of 3.3 million in 1993 to an anticipated 4.3 million by the end of this decade. Two years ago, 64 percent of graduating high school students entered college. It is unlikely that university freshman classes will expand to meet the growing demand for placement. And despite suggestions from several quarters that distance education will save money and make campus expansion less necessary, distance education has not yet taken hold universally. As a result, community colleges will need to maximize the use of their facilities and may, in fact, become more of a force emphasizing and utilizing distance education as well.

There are other challenges – such as finding new, creative sources of funds at a time when four-year universities are expanding their endowments exponentially, and when many new bids are surfacing for precious state and local resources. Also, more frequently, state agencies and accreditation institutions are seeking additional evidence of the overall value of community colleges – in terms of some of the details noted above, such as degree of student transfers to four-year schools and achievements on licensing examinations and other tests.

At the same time, one of the looming questions is whether community colleges should be authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees. During the period of rapid expansion in the 1950s and 1960s, many two-year colleges began offering bachelor's degrees and thus joined the ranks of the senior institutions. That move subsided, but now, once again, is an issue. Several states have authorized the community colleges to begin bachelor's training in certain areas. What is likely to result, though, is collaboration between two-year and four-year schools, with the latter providing upper division courses on the community college campuses.

Through its lateral expansion in curriculum and joint ventures with community agencies, the two-year college has expanded its role from merely that of providing pre-baccalaureate education. By maintaining open admissions for all who wish to enter, it has become the lungs of the higher education system, expanding when the number of students seeking postsecondary study grows, reducing its enrollments of young people when the numbers decline.

With it all, the community college has maintained a unique role as a vital component of postsecondary education in America. And now that role is on the ascent. ■

Arthur M. Cohen is professor of higher education at the University of California at Los Angeles, and director of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse for Community Colleges at UCLA. He is co-author, with F.B. Brawer, of The American Community College.

LAMPS BESIDE THE GOLDEN DOOR

BY
EVELYN CLEMENTS

"Give me your tired, your poor; your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."
Emma Lazarus, The New Colossus

These words, etched into a plaque on the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, are at the core of America.

The values suggested – of reaching out to newcomers, of encouraging them to learn and thereby to thrive in an unfamiliar environment – are reflected throughout U.S. society, including, most notably, in the framework of the nation's community college system.

The community college is uniquely American: it is open to all; it offers easy access; it provides a caring and supportive environment; and it enables students – regardless of their ability – to further their education, hone their job skills or change careers. Its appeal and importance to new Americans is very special, but it is equally attractive to U.S. natives of college age and even older. For all potential students, it offers hopes for a better future, and – ultimately – literally can change people's lives.

One example:

Jim (the name has been changed) was a chef and omelet-maker in a local restaurant. When he was in his late 20s, cancer struck and he was forced to quit his job. He had no health insurance, and therefore no choice but to go on welfare, embarrassed though he was about it. As his health began to improve, he knew he had to find a new direction to his life. With U.S. Government financial aid to assist him, Jim enrolled at a local community college, where he thrived. When a particular student fellowship program offered him the opportunity to travel to China, he seized the chance. That endeavor introduced him to a new world. He transferred to a four-year university, and eventually taught in Japan for a number of years. Now he has returned to the United States to continue his career in the classroom.

There are legions of students like Jim who enroll in America's 1,100 community colleges that serve 10 million students in credit and non-credit courses each year. They comprise a world of opportunity, as statistics bear out. More than half of all community college students are the first ones in their families to attend college; 30 percent of community college enrollment is composed of minorities. What is more, according to a recent study, 61 percent of community college students are over 21 years of age. Many of these students would never have pursued higher education if it had not been for the community college.

And, to return to the "lamp beside the golden door," a number are recent immigrants.

Take Tooch Van.

He was three when his parents and nine siblings were executed by the Cambodian Khmer Rouge. He spent years in a Cambodian refugee camp. The name Tooch means small, and it was his nickname while he was living in the camp. He has no recollection of his real name. Upon finally being liberated from the camp, Tooch walked barefoot with other refugees for three months until he reached Phnom Penh. A refugee family adopted him and helped him start school. He eventually graduated from high school and began driving a taxi to finance his study of English at a private language academy.

After working as a program officer for a time for Pact/Cambodia, a U.S. nongovernmental organization, he later served as a program assistant for the U.S. Agency for International Development at the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, thanks to his language skills. Through his diplomatic contacts, he was encouraged to apply for a U.S. student visa to attend Middlesex Community College in Lowell, Massachusetts. He met the difficult visa requirements (English language proficiency, proof of acceptance by a U.S. college, and evidence he could meet tuition and living costs), received the visa and a scholarship, and enrolled at the school in Lowell (a region encompassing the second largest Southeast Asian population mass in the United States).

Tooch thrived at Middlesex. He took an active part in student government and was inducted into an academic honor society. He followed up his two-year stint by continuing his education at a four-year school, Trinity College in Connecticut. Honor has followed upon honor ever since. Awarded a prestigious Woodrow Wilson Fellowship to study public policy and international affairs at Princeton University, he gained admission recently to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. For three summers, he has returned to Cambodia to work for Pact/Cambodia and was planning to spend the summer of 2002 there – this time escorting Middlesex Community College faculty scholars to his native land, bringing his experiences, and his life story, full circle.

Jim, Tooch and countless others like them offer the nation, and the world community, hope for the future. The seeds of that hope lie, frequently, in the challenges and commitment of America's community colleges. These institutions offer open access, courses to develop skills, the chance to extend one's education to the full four-year university program and beyond, workforce development through partnerships with business and industry, collaboration with elementary and secondary school education, and – not the least of the benefits – lifelong learning opportunities.

In that way, figuratively and literally, they are lamps for the present and future. ■

Evelyn Clements is Vice-President for Student Development at Middlesex Community College, Massachusetts.

THE GLOBAL LINKAGE

By
Michael J. Bandler

On a community college campus in Baltimore, Maryland, a young Kenyan on a student visa is discovering new educational horizons and possibilities that will expand his knowledge, to benefit him when he returns to his homeland. Not far away, at another school in a Washington, D.C., suburb, a young Romanian-born student successfully pursues a career in business. On the other side of the world from the eastern United States, Sri Lankan, Thai and Chinese specialists in education contemplate the advantages that might accrue from an American-style two-year education program in their jurisdictions.

One hundred and one years after the first public community, or junior, college opened in the United States, the American model is being analyzed and adapted by representatives of educational systems and government ministry officials of other countries. At the same time, as the U.S. community college population has doubled since 1993, the percentage of students from other countries in attendance also has grown dramatically.

This two-pronged thrust – serving both those who come in increasing numbers to the United States to study, and those abroad who wish to transplant the U.S. model on their soils – is of vital importance these days, mirroring the increased significance of community colleges on the U.S. higher education landscape in general.

In a recent conversation, James McKenney, vice president for economic development and international programs of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) – representing more than 10 million students on more than 1,100 campuses – reflected on this burgeoning global relationship.

At the outset, he pointed to the growing number of international workforce development partnerships – citing such linkages as those between an Ohio state community college and the government of Tanzania; a two-year component of the New York State university system and Mexico; a community college in St. Louis, Missouri, and the ministry of education of Guyana; a two-year college in a Los Angeles, California, suburb and the University of Asmara, in Eritrea; and a school in Maryland and a medical college in Russia.

Ties such as these, McKenney noted, focus on a wide range of coursework – from hotel management and nursing to information technology and the skills to operate waste water treatment plants. And they continue to blossom.

Q: What are the roots of this global interest in America's community college system?
A: You have to look at this from two perspectives. It was right after World War II that the community colleges here began their big growth spurt. So, with regard to people from overseas enrolling here as students, it happened around the 1960s and 1970s. They come in waves, basically by word of mouth. Someone has a good experience, and tells people back home about it. My wife works at a community

college in Baltimore [Maryland] County that has a large number of students from Kenya. The school doesn't actively recruit, but the students keep coming. They send word back to families and friends that it's a good campus, a good environment, and others would be welcome. That's how the population grows. And unlike American students, who prepare for college by scouting out different schools, students from overseas rely on prior information and go with that, with what's familiar. And it's working.

In terms of the other side of the picture, when community colleges were created here, they were meant to be the first two years of the university experience for those who were thinking about continuing. But now, the comprehensive community college system has an occupational mission as well as a transfer role. That's tremendously important. So even though the students who come here from abroad may have as their goal transferring eventually to universities, when you speak with administrators and public policy coordinators from other countries, what draws them toward recreating the system in their land are the occupational and training aspects, our way of connecting with business and industry. They marvel at that. They wonder how we do it, how we link up with the economy.

Q: And policy makers and education ministry representatives continue to come here.

A: Absolutely. We just spent time with representatives from Korea. My understanding is that Sri Lanka is preparing to launch a community college system, and that Brazil and Venezuela are very serious about it as well. Indeed, we're beginning to see movement towards community colleges in Europe, which had been resisting it. Denmark, of course, has had a system somewhat like ours in place for over 100 years. The Netherlands hasn't, but now is working toward it. Canada has such a system, and Australia and New Zealand have developed them. Mexico is working to create a network of two-year technical colleges aligned with local industry, but is struggling a bit with structure. You find that in southern India, the Roman Catholic Church and state and local governments have set up dozens of small community colleges that offer courses such as carpentry and auto repair for the unemployed. Pakistan is interested in developing community colleges too. Israel and the United Arab Emirates have community colleges, and there's one in the West Bank as well. Taiwan has a system in place, and Thailand is planning one. We've been working with the Chinese, who are deeply interested in creating community colleges, also for training purposes, in fields like up-to-date agriculture and environmental preservation. For the Chinese, in particular, it's a way of democratizing education, and getting it out to the masses. They like the two-year structure, because it's less expensive and occupationally focused. That, absolutely, is the key.

Q: Tell me something about the process by which links are established between education specialists and government officials from overseas and the appropriate offices here. To begin with, what are they looking for?

A: In a sense, America is the father of the community college concept. But what you need to know, and what we tell them, is that we don't have *the* model – we may have 50 models. So when they come here, they'll probably find something that works particularly for them. For example, in some countries, because of rigid controls, if a community college system isn't developed by and maintained within the existing university appàratus, it isn't going to happen. So they look at New York, Tennessee and Ohio, where community colleges are a part of the state university system. Other countries want to bypass that bureaucracy. For them, the independent community college systems of North Carolina, Florida, New Jersey, Arizona or Massachusetts are perfect models.

Q: How are the connections made? How do the sides come together?

A: Our association is well known, having existed for over 75 years. So word does get around. They contact us [http://www.aacc.nche.edu/], and we assess, in general terms, their needs. Then we try to match them with the appropriate systems here, giving them choices and flexibility. For example, I got a call recently from a diplomat at the Embassy of India here in Washington, looking to set up an itinerary for a visiting educational specialist from the Indian government's Department of Science and Technology in New Delhi. We followed up on it by sending this representative to the places he needed to survey, and he was quite pleased with the results.

Q: What other aspects of our system that appeals to education experts overseas?

A: Another point to be made is that the average age of our community college students is 29. That means that the occupational mission means as much to the adult population as it does to the traditional college-age student. We're in an era of lifelong learning, driven by technology and the information age. Education is not a stair-step to knowledge, in which, when you reach the top, it's over. It's an escalator of knowledge. It keeps on moving forward. So you need institutions that are designed to provide booster shots along the way for your entire population – a flexible menu of different kinds of degrees and credentialing. Today, people may get an associate [two-year] degree, and if they're in the field of information technology, may not need a four-year bachelor of arts degree. But they will have to go back for booster shots. And for that, they come to their local community colleges. And it's as true overseas, in many countries, as it is here. We've discovered that in this country, 29 percent of the non-credit students already have a degree. It may be even more than a baccalaureate [four-year] degree. It could be a Ph.D. They're coming back for refresher courses for enhanced competency, so they can continue to work successfully. And that's what is being noticed, and duplicated overseas more and more. So far it's true mostly in the industrialized West – in the "further education" systems in the United Kingdom and Scotland – which reflect the same kinds of pressures and needs we have here. It's happening in Germany too.

Q: Is it fair, or accurate, to say that lifelong learning is becoming the primary motivation these days for creating community colleges overseas?

A: Yes, for the most part – the need to serve the population beyond the normal college years – the adult education demographics. Generally speaking, in the developing world, specifically, it's recognized that the foundation knowledge has to be revisited. For example, quality control in modern manufacturing wasn't a major concern overseas a generation ago. Today, it's a big deal; you've got to minimize inferior manufacturing. How do you do that? Through quality control, which is largely mathematics-based. This means that people who learned elements of math at 18 or 19 that they didn't necessarily have use for at the time have discovered, in their mid-40s, that all of a sudden they need it. So before they can assume the principles of quality control, they must go back to beef up their forgotten mathematics skills.

Q: Let's go back for a moment to the student population from abroad in America's community colleges. You said before that, at least as far as your wife's school in Baltimore is concerned, there's no need to actively recruit, unless you want to significantly grow and/or diversify your international student population. That is what happened at Spokane (Washington) Community College, mostly with respect to countries in the Far East. And the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles has been attracting students from the Czech Republic after years of pursuing students from Taiwan and Korea. Do you know if this is becoming a familiar pattern?

A: I can't say categorically, one way or the other. I do know that our association just took representatives of 18 colleges to Taiwan, Korea and Japan for career fairs, college fairs – to present the community college model by itself, rather than having the community colleges and universities featured side by side. I should also point out that certainly lots of community colleges in the interior of the United States would like to draw in more students from overseas. They're under pressure to internationalize their curriculum, to expose American students to the notion that they are connected to a worldwide economy. Having that diversity on campuses in middle America – something that schools in Florida and other states on the coasts have experienced – helps.

Q: The students who come here – would you say that for the most part, they're primed to stay, or do they plan to return to their own countries and families?

A: That's a tough question. What they intend when they come, and what they do after four or five years here can be two different things. And it can shift, sometimes for very subtle reasons, like conditions back home or circumstances here. At the recent AACC convention, we honored, as "alumnus of the year," the Governor of Lagos. He had graduated from the community college system in Chicago, went on to university, became an accountant here, went to

work for the oil companies back in Nigeria, and became part of the political structure there. That's an example of what happens. At the same conference, we honored an Egyptian-born alumnus who came to study at a community college in Detroit [Michigan]. He stayed. So some stay and some go home.

Q: Thinking about the opportunities our schools provide to recent immigrants, I wonder, are there other countries that are involved helping to educate their own immigrant groups?

A: Recently, we had a delegation here from Haarlem, in The Netherlands. They're facing considerable immigration from southern Europe and the Middle East. They've never had it to the degree it exists now, and they're wrestling with how to deal with it in terms of educating these new groups.

In that regard, I have to point out something else, in terms of how we deal with recent immigrants to America, that's terribly important. The colleges here – with open access – invariably encounter people where they are, including in terms of their language fluency. We have numbers of people coming in, from one country or another, who happen not to be fluent even in their native language. So we have to teach them their own language before they learn English and before they begin to matriculate in the regular course structure. That's also what the Dutch are dealing with today, with respect to newcomers from the Middle East.

Q: To sum up, then, what do you foresee developing in the near future in terms of the relationship between America's community colleges and the education sector abroad?

A: At the recent urging of our board, I think we are going to be more aggressive in seeking linkages with other countries and organizations that desire information on community-college-like modeling, even creating memoranda of understanding with these other organizations – such as those we're working on now with Denmark and Germany. Overall, I think it's safe to say that the relationship will continue to strengthen and to grow. ■

Michael J. Bandler is a writer with the Office of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State.

THE CASE FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE

BY
KENNETH P. WALKER

Preface

In a recent report focusing on the fiscal crisis in American higher education, the Council for Aid to Education's (CAE) Commission on National Investment in Higher Education issued a telling caveat:

"At a time when the level of education needed for productive employment [is] increasing, the opportunity to go to college will be denied to millions of Americans unless sweeping changes are made to control costs, halt sharp increases in tuition and increase other sources of revenue."

This fiscal issue in higher education calls for creative solutions. Traditional thinking, based on past experiences and marked by limitations, does not benefit millions of students who will need a baccalaureate degree, but cannot afford to attend a four-year university. Rather, consider community colleges – which are capable of developing innovative ways of solving the challenges of rising demand, limited access, and increasing costs. The community college baccalaureate degree is a logical solution for this problem.

In the next decade, American education will discover that the three C's – collaboration, competition and cooperation – will become driving forces in the decision-making process. Examples of collaboration include the university centers that already have been developed on such community college campuses as Macomb (Michigan) Community College, North Harris Montgomery Community College (Texas), and St. Petersburg Junior College and Edison Community College, both in Florida. In addition, on a broader, global scale, the British Open University is exploring partnerships with community colleges for the purpose of making baccalaureate degrees available through distance learning.

Competition is increasing rapidly from private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions that used to grant only certificates, but now award associate and baccalaureate degrees. The number of corporate universities has increased from 400 in 1988 to more than 1,000 today. Many of these one-time unaccredited institutions are now accredited by regional associations. Such competition from the private sector will continue to have a major impact on higher education.

If it is true, as the CAE report noted, that "widespread access to higher education is ... critical to the economic health and social welfare of the nation," then it is imperative that the vast system of community colleges play a major role, joining the mix by beginning to offer baccalaureate degrees. The facilities, faculty, staff and programs already are in place at convenient locations. Expanding the community college mission to include baccalaureate degrees – while retaining the system's open-door philosophy as well as responsiveness to local needs – is a logical option for addressing the increasing demands that now exist, in terms of access and affordability. This is not to suggest that community colleges be converted into four-year state colleges. On the contrary, in fact, it is essential that the local mission and governance of community colleges be maintained. Moreover, not all two-year schools wish

to – or should – expand their missions. Still, the opportunity and authority for doing so should be available where situations, needs and desires exist.

The community colleges in the United States have a long history of adaptation to the educational needs of the times. When they were first founded, junior colleges primarily provided lower-division academic programs for students who would then transfer to four-year colleges or universities. After World War II, when servicemen returned to their families and communities, junior colleges modified their programs to meet the expanded demand for education. During the 1960s, U.S. Government funding helped community colleges expand their programs in vocational, technical and continuing education.

But these modifications in mission, programs and culture did not alter the fundamental philosophy of the community college. Equally unaltered as a result of all these changes was the local governance of the community college. Responsiveness to the changing needs of the society around it is basic to the essence of community colleges. The mission should be defined not by needs of a bygone era, but rather what is necessary – through responsiveness, adaptation and growth – to meet the changing dynamics of the communities the schools serve.

Adding baccalaureate degrees to the existing curricular offerings would enable community colleges to increase geographical, financial and academic access to higher education. It would promote cost efficiencies through the use of existing infrastructures. It would foster the opportunity for immigrant or returning students to succeed through smaller classes, less rigid sequencing and greater scheduling options. It would encourage upward mobility among students with associate degrees. It would stabilize family and employment relationships for students as they complete the four-year course of study. And it would maintain the historical community college commitment to economic and workforce development and responsiveness to community needs for specialized programs.

Then, too, it makes economic sense to utilize the existing community college infrastructure for the purpose of meeting higher education needs at a time when students and parents increasingly are questioning the cost of higher education. Nearly half of all undergraduates attending public institutions are enrolled in community colleges; many would like to be able to complete their degrees where they began them.

In a recent survey of students at my school, Edison Community College, in fact, 80 percent of the respondents said that they would like to complete their baccalaureate degree at Edison. They gave as their reasons accessibility, lower costs and availability of the types of degrees they seek.

Besides this sense of familiarity sparking an interest in the creation of a baccalaureate degree for community colleges, let's look at adult, or continuing, education, which has taken on a new meaning as greater numbers of older students enter the community college system. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that the average American worker will hold four to six jobs in two or three different career areas in the course of his or her employed life.

Where will these adults receive the training necessary to make these shifts? Regional universities do not always provide ready geographic, financial or academic access. The lower tuition costs and convenient geographical locations of community colleges would mean greater opportunities for significantly more of these students. For the adult learner who owns a home, is raising a family and also is working full-time, taking classes at a local college is often the only viable option. Nontraditional students need, and deserve, nontraditional baccalaureate degree access and choices.

In addition, community colleges have close ties with local businesses, and have the potential of being more responsive than the established four-year universities to local economic, demographic, social and political changes. This unique partnership linking community colleges and local businesses can offer students the opportunity to provide employers with a well-trained, educated workforce.

Education and income are inextricably linked to one another. The CAE's report stressed that "as service-related jobs have come to dominate the workplace, the college degree or at least some form of postsecondary education and training has replaced the high school diploma as the entry card into rewarding employment." As a result, as noted above, the report concluded that "widespread access to higher education is...critical to the economic

health and social welfare of the nation."

For the vast majority of the American population, one of the crucial factors in U.S. education is access – particularly as higher education takes on such heightened significance. Indeed, according to a publication of the Southern Regional Education Board, occupations requiring college degrees were the fastest-growing segment of the economy. Projections through 2005 were expected to continue. In fact, of the nearly 200 occupations anticipated to have above-average growth during the early years of the 21st century, 34 percent require at least a four-year college degree.

As we move into this new century, and as the "baby boomer" generation (persons born between 1946 and 1964) begins to retire, a smaller U.S. workforce is expected to compete in the global marketplace. From this perspective, higher education needs to be more generally dispersed among the populace in order to maintain our standard of living and to protect our democracy. Providing baccalaureate degrees at the community college level is an important tool for increasing access for minorities and disadvantaged students.

Several states – among them Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania and Utah – already have moved to create a community college baccalaureate degree. A case in point:

In Florida, a post-secondary Education Planning Commission's five-year plan for higher education, warning that the state's baccalaureate degree production will be inadequate to meet its economic goals and those of its citizens, projected that "by 2010 there will be in excess of 200,000 additional college-credit students enrolled in the state's institutions of higher education. Post-secondary sectors and institutions are not prepared for the projected increase in enrollments." As a result, the commission developed several responses for addressing this issue, including the recommendation to "authorize community colleges to offer selected baccalaureate degrees."

In November 1998, the Florida State Board of Community Colleges adopted its own five-year strategic plan, in light of "increasing employer demand for performance-ready graduates at the baccalaureate level." The board called for "a new practitioner-oriented 'workforce bachelor's degree' which emphasizes the competencies demanded in a contemporary business environment." This degree, the board stressed, "represents the natural and logical next evolution of Florida's community colleges."

The process continued. A committee of the Florida Council of Community College Presidents developed a course of action that would require approval of such baccalaureate programs by the local District Board of Trustees, the State Board of Community Colleges and the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission. Since then, both houses of the Florida legislature, with unanimity, passed a bill authorizing baccalaureate degrees at community colleges under certain conditions. The state governor signed it into law.

And now we have results. This year, the state's board of education authorized Miami Dade Community College to grant baccalaureate degrees in education. It also authorized Edison Community College to offer a joint baccalaureate degree with Florida Gulf Coast University – a four-year institution – with the programs, in public service management and computer technology, available at the Edison University Center.

We cannot escape the fact that the needs of a technology-based society will drive major changes in higher education. And we cannot simply revise old strategies; we must create completely new ones. Competition from both the private for-profit and nonprofit sectors will impel public institutions to rethink their missions and their visions in the years ahead. State governments, spurred by the voters, will urge public universities, regional colleges and community colleges to find efficient, effective and accountable ways to meet the ever-increasing demand for affordable access to baccalaureate degrees. The answer may lie in the community college curriculum and degree process itself, with the needs and interests of students paramount. ■

Kenneth P. Walker is president of Edison Community College in Fort Myers, Florida, and president of the Community College Baccalaureate Association. *This article is reprinted with the permission of the author. Copyright © 2000 by Kenneth P. Walker.*

FROM CLASSROOM TO WORKPLACE: TIES THAT BIND

BY
MICHAEL J. BANDLER

"Community colleges have always been driven by what is most relevant to the employment market."
Bill Gates, chairman, Microsoft Corporation

Lisa Heald Maynor was looking for the light at the end of the tunnel.

A teenage mother with no high school diploma and scant work experience, she was living in a homeless shelter when she discovered that – with the assistance of a local educational program in central Virginia – she could move from welfare to work.

The program is called Charlottesville Works, a division of Piedmont Valley (Virginia) Community College (PVCC). It provides education and training opportunities to low-income adults, dislocated workers and single mothers – anyone on welfare who is struggling to find a job. Its funds come from state and U.S. Government grants, in partnership with local governments and businesses.

As a result, Maynor obtained her high school equivalency certificate, and completed PVCC's insurance support technician certificate program. She began an internship with the local State Farm Insurance Companies office, which led to permanent employment there. Her life has changed, her children are in a healthier environment, and – not the least of the bright spots – she recently bought her first car.

Charlottesville Works is one of thousands of workplace programs already in place or being created within America's community college system. Indeed, workplace development is one of the primary aspects, and principal success stories, of the nation's century-old two-year college framework. Its success depends specifically on cooperation and vision in all quarters – at the schools, in the corporate and work environment, and in the local and regional public jurisdictions.

Throughout their history, and even more so today, community colleges have been critical to facilitating effective school-to-work systems. As a report of the ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges, at the University of California at Los Angeles, has detailed, besides being the primary link between secondary and post-secondary education, they offer "creative transition programs such as tech prep, apprenticeships, cooperative education and career education." In addition, they join with employers, communities, governments and labor organizations.

"Community colleges are, and will continue to be, essential partners in the development and implementation of workforce training programs that meet the skills and needs of Pennsylvania's employers," Secretary Johnny J. Butler, of that state's Department of Labor and Industry, says.

The mid-Atlantic state exemplifies the commitments of jurisdictions across the United States to workforce development. Its community college training network – linking 14 schools – provides a range of education and training opportunities not only to benefit students, but also to help ensure that Pennsylvania will remain competitive as far as its workforce is concerned.

When a local steel manufacturer, for example, needed training programs for its mechanical

maintenance employees and electricians, Community College of Beaver County nearby created a 30-course industrial training program. When Bucks County, Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia, was experiencing a shortage of nurse aides in its hospitals and nursing homes, the local community college established a certified nurse aide program. When the Philadelphia region found itself without a solid pool of workers for its print shop industry, the city's community college created an associate arts and sciences degree in print shop technology.

"Pennsylvania has long recognized the interdependence of workforce and economic development," says Sam McCullough, Secretary of the state's Department of Community and Economic Development. "A quality workforce is a critical element of business competitiveness. Training is a key element in building a strong workforce."

When Norton Manufacturing Company, a manufacturer of automotive crankshafts in Fostoria, Ohio, needed more employees to add aircraft crankshafts to its product line, it confronted a tight job market. A solution was found by a local private industry council in five area counties: Terra Community College, in nearby Fremont, joined a local vocational school in providing 160 hours of education and training that facilitated the hiring of 11 new employees by Norton.

St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, in Hartford, Connecticut, has found a need for customized, cost-effective training for its employees. So, too, have such corporations as Travelers Insurance, Pitney Bowes and some 300 other employers across the state. And so they have turned to the Business & Industry Services Network, linking Connecticut's dozen two-year educational institutions. To benefit its employees, St. Francis joined Capital Community College to customize a 10-week Spanish-language course emphasizing health care, to narrow the communication barrier between patients and visitors. Hospital official David Watson cites "the creativity and flexibility of the professional staff at the college, who provided high-quality and low-cost education," as a vital element in the successful launching of the program.

Pitney Bowes – a manufacturer of mailing, faxing and copier equipment in Stamford, Connecticut – found a way to deal with the shrinking pool of educated, skilled workers needed for its special services. For the past 12 years, more than 1,000 company employees have been trained in basic mathematics skills – and nearly 500 in literacy (including basic reading, writing, speaking, listening and interpersonal skills) – through courses arranged by Norwalk Community College.

The state of North Carolina (with nearly five dozen community colleges, the third-largest system of its kind in the United States) is acknowledged to be the national leader in support of economic workplace development. Each school has industrial training experts on staff who not only can bring training expertise to a company, but also are aware of the needs of the local labor market. Training programs are devised and coordinated jointly by representatives of a college, a company and the state. Moreover, North Carolina has pioneered customized industry training for new and expanded industries – offering courses in a variety of industries ranging from auto parts and electronics manufacture to biotechnology and data processing.

One of the more accomplished community college systems in the United States is in Maricopa County, Arizona, which encompasses such cities as Phoenix and Scottsdale. Its community colleges foundation – which encourages companies to provide scholarships and other assistance for worthy students – has stressed the essentiality of workforce development. For the past several years, for example, Intel Semiconductors has enjoyed an uncommon partnership with four of the schools to produce semiconductor-manufacturing technicians, while, at the same time, providing hundreds of students with highly marketable career training.

With these numerous efforts underway to stimulate and expand workforce development, at least one state, Illinois, has fashioned a special way to honor two-year institutions in the state, and their workplace partners. Besides promoting excellence in workforce development and heightening awareness of the effectiveness of community college workforce development efforts, the awards are aimed at

honoring those whose joint efforts have had significant benefit to regional businesses and their employees, and – even more important – publicizing innovative ideas and model programs to other community colleges around the state and the nation.

In this manner, and through other means yet to be imagined, the collaborative efforts to develop the workforce of the future will be bolstered, enhanced and disseminated. ■

Michael J. Bandler is a writer with the Office of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State.

U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGES: LAUNCHING PADS FOR LIFE

BY
TRACEY WONG BRIGGS
FROM *USA TODAY*

Daniyar Zhanbekov arrived in Columbus, Georgia, from Kazakhstan in 1998 as a secondary school exchange student. Claudia Barerra came to New York City from Venezuela in 1999 for an English-language program.

Neither even knew what a community college was before they landed in the United States, but both have emerged as straight-A students and campus leaders who say two-year colleges brought them educational opportunities that are allowing them to pursue the most American of dreams.

"It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor," says Barerra, 23, student government treasurer at Bergen Community College in Paramus, New Jersey. "If you're willing to work hard and set goals, you can achieve them."

Zhanbekov and Barerra are among 20 students cited in an annual recognition program for two-year college students, sponsored by the American publication *USA TODAY*, for academic success, leadership and service.

"These students have come from all walks of life and even from different parts of the world to achieve academically. They are models of scholarship and altruism, even though many also have family and job obligations," *USA TODAY* editor Karen Jurgensen noted. "We honor them to recognize that great things are happening at all levels of education."

The honorees mirror the diversity that marks community college education in the nation.

Joel-Henry Mansfield graduated first in his class at Lowell High School, a selective academic public institution in San Francisco, California. Though many of his classmates went on to Berkeley and other University of California campuses, Mansfield, 20, started his pre-law studies at Canada (Community) College in nearby Redwood City so he could take care of his grandmother.

Married at 19 and a mother at 21, Gina Yacynych, 42, started taking courses at Cambria County (Pennsylvania) Community College three years ago to support her church volunteer work. "I hadn't been in school in 20 years, but I really enjoyed it, and I thought I might as well get a degree while I was at it," says Yacynych, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work. The mother of three found herself taking courses alongside her 19-year-old daughter, Stephanie.

Zhanbekov, 20, the only son of a college professor and an engineer, has lived in several countries, traveled all over Europe as a high school debater and is fluent in five languages. After graduating from a U.S. high school, he chose Chattahoochee Valley Community College in Phenix City, Alabama, over a scholarship at a four-year college because of the challenging coursework and the personal attention the community college offered. "Everyone at the school knows my name, and they are always available," he says.

Stephanie Markgraf moved back to her New Jersey hometown when her mother was in the advanced stages of multiple sclerosis. An artist with almost 20

years in the offset printing business, Markgraf, 42, decided to upgrade her job skills at Cumberland County College while caring for her mother. The community college experience was so positive that Markgraf decided to pursue a full degree and eventually teach graphic arts.

Naeem Ahmad is a Pakistani immigrant who drove a cab for two years before taking an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) course at Miami-Dade (Florida) Community College. Ahmad, 25, always intended to go to university, but he chose to begin at Miami-Dade because of its educational quality, accessibility, opportunity and low cost. "I was told the two-year college was cheaper, and that you might get a scholarship (to continue at a four-year school)," says Ahmad, who received several scholarship offers.

George Bruque, 21, resisted pressure to apply to University of California schools directly out of high school because he wasn't ready to leave his family. "I had the grades and I could have gone, but moving away was a big, big step," he says. "(Fresno) City College is a lot cheaper, and the comparable courses are just as rigorous. There were no drawbacks." Bruque will finish his pre-medicine studies at the University of California-Davis.

Born in New Jersey but raised in Nigeria, Oladmeji Sule moved to Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, after high school to stay with relatives and study computer science. Sule, 21, chose Minneapolis Community & Technical College because of its accessibility by bus lines. Quickly, though, he was impressed by the educational opportunities and diversity there.

Charlotte LaVergne, 37, started pursuing a nursing degree in 1984 at Louisiana State University at Eunice, taking one night course while pregnant with her fourth child. She lost the baby during pregnancy, but as a result of her experience, decided to become an obstetrician. Now the mother of seven children ages six to 22, she attended community college when her schedule allowed. "Even though I was not supposed to beat those odds, this school provided me with the resources to achieve those goals," she reflects.

Brenda Brooks-Solveson, 39, and a mother of two, entered Edison Community College in Fort Myers, Florida, when she was denied admission to Florida Gulf Coast University. "They wouldn't take me, based on my achievement test scores I took 17 years before," she says. "I had heard through the grapevine they were taking everybody. I was crushed. I cried the whole way home."

She started as a non-degree student at Edison, but found encouragement every step of the way, piling up A's in courses like psychology and algebra before gaining the confidence to enter the honors program and major in earth science.

For LaVergne, who served as a supplemental instructional leader for organic chemistry and won campus service and leadership awards, life is never a question of being too hard.

"As long as something is available to me, and those who've gone before me are working with me, I'm going to go for it." ■

Tracey Wong Briggs is on the staff of USA TODAY. *Copyright (c) 2002,* USA TODAY. *Reprinted with permission.*

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INTERNET SITES

Government

ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges
http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/ERIC/
One of 16 clearinghouses sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Education, ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) maintains an extensive database of research reports, conference papers, curricula, digests and other materials. In addition to a community college finder, other useful sections of the site allow you to search the database, learn about educational programs focused on the study of community colleges and access the latest publications. The community college-related links to associations and organizations, conferences <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/ERIC/ccconf.htm>, financial aid, government-based resources, individual community colleges, comprehensive subject bibliographies, literature and teaching resources are noteworthy as well.

U.S. Dept. of Education: Community Colleges Homepage
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/CCLO/index.html
Community and technical colleges are an integral part of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education's initiative, "Preparing America's Future." Links to information about national state grants, national program activities, and national leadership on policy issues and practices can be found on this site.

U.S. Dept. of Education: Education Resource Organizations Directory (EROD)
http://www.ed.gov/Programs/bastmp/SDCC.htm
"Exchanges information on issues, trends, and projects, including state and federal legislation as well as finances relating to community colleges; shares data from the state and national levels to provide a perspective on community colleges; promotes research and legislation at the national level in concert with the American Association of Community Colleges; provides programs of assistance to members."

Nongovernmental

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
http://www.aacc.nche.edu/
The "national voice for two-year associate degree-granting institutions," AACC works to foster the goals of community colleges and higher education. AACC's Web site includes useful information about community colleges: notable alumni, news, historical information and current trends and statistics. Links to a community college finder, AACC's bookstore, a career center, a resource center, research initiatives, "hot" topics, journals, periodicals, dissertations and a number of affiliated councils are also located here.

American Council on International and Intercultural Education (ACIIE)
http://www.aciie.org/
Using its "collective expertise to facilitate programs, activities, and linkages in international and intercultural education," this organization is an advocate for community colleges in the global arena. Use this site to access information about funding opportunities, international/intercultural activities, publications, conferences, teleconferences, networking opportunities, exchange and study abroad opportunities, and sources of international/intercultural materials, products and services.

Campus Compact/National Center for Community Colleges
http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/organizations/community/compact/
This national coalition of community college presidents is committed to "helping students develop the values and skills of civic participation through involvement in public service." The Web site includes sample syllabi, conference and awards information, publications, model service-learning projects and information on civic engagement.

Center for Community College Policy
http://www.communitycollegepolicy.org/
Based at the Education Commission of the States in Denver, Colorado, the center conducts research and analysis and serves as a clearinghouse for state officials, college leaders and the media on community college policy at the state level. The center also organizes national, regional and state-level workshops and offers technical assistance to states.

Center for Urban Community College Leadership
http://www.nyu.edu/education/alt/center/
New York University's School of Education established this center to meet the need for leadership training for community college administrators. The center, which targets senior-level and mid-level administrators for participation in doctoral-level studies, is "unique among higher

education administration programs in that it focuses specifically on the urban community college and includes significant fieldwork and internship opportunities in the curriculum during the academic year and summers."

The Chair Academy
http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/chair/
Statewide, national and international training programs for community college leaders offered by the Academy for Leadership Training and Development of the Maricopa (Arizona) Community Colleges are described on this site.

Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA)
http://www.aaccbd.org/
The mission of the CCBA is "to promote the development of the Community College baccalaureate degree as a means of addressing the national problems of student access, demand, and cost." To this end, the site features articles, a newsletter and membership information.

Community College Leadership Program (CCLP)
http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cclp/
The Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin's Department of Educational Administration has focused on the preparation of community college leaders since its inception in 1946. The CCLP has also established a service-oriented "field base" with community colleges from across North America for student recruitment and graduate placement and has developed a research agenda to improve the quality of "teaching, learning, and student services in open-door institutions."

Community College Research Center
http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~iee/ccrc/
Publications, seminars and conference presentations are among the tools used by the Community College Research Center to disseminate its research findings on the "critical questions concerning the fundamental purposes, problems, and performances of community colleges." The center is housed in the Institute on Education and the Economy at Teachers College/Columbia University in New York City.

Community College Web
http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/cc/
From the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction at the Maricopa Community College in Arizona, this site contains a searchable directory of more than 1,200 community college Web sites in the United States, Canada, and ten other countries. In addition, a comprehensive collection of resources related to community colleges is searchable by topics such as Students, Technology and Organizations and by keyword.

Community Colleges for International Development, Inc. (CCID)
http://ccid.kirkwood.cc.ia.us/
The mission of CCID, a non-profit consortium of approximately 98 two-year colleges worldwide (86 in North America), is "to provide opportunities for building global relationships that strengthen educational programs and promote economic development." Since its incorporation nearly 25 years ago, CCID has been engaged in vocational/technical educational training, non-formal education and workforce development activities in more than 35 countries.

Council for the Study of Community Colleges
http://www.cscconline.org/
The members of this affiliate of the American Association of Community Colleges include university-based researchers and community college educators who promote scholarship on the community colleges. The purposes of the council are to develop in-service education for community college professionals, to conduct and disseminate relevant research, to serve as a forum for professionals who study community colleges, and to recognize outstanding contributions in the field of community college education.

League for Innovation in the Community College
http://www.league.org/
The league is an international organization dedicated to "catalyzing the potential of the community college movement." The site contains detailed information about the league's activities, which include hosting conferences and institutes, developing Web resources, conducting research, producing publications, and leading projects and initiatives with member colleges, corporate partners and other agencies.

National Council for Continuing Education and Training (NCCET)
http://www.nccet.org/nccet/home.html
Professional development activities in the fields of continuing education, community services, workforce development and distance learning are sponsored by this community college organization.

National Council for Research and Planning (NCRP)
http://www.nmsu.edu/~NCRP/
Dedicated to serving institutional and planning professionals in two-year, postsecondary educational institutions, NCRP is an official council of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Some of the NCRP's goals include identifying and articulating research and planning issues, facilitating communication among various interest groups, promoting the training and professional development of researchers and formulating research and planning policies within AACC.

National Research and Dissemination Centers for Career and Technical Education
http://www.nccte.org/
Based in Columbus, Ohio and St. Paul, Minnesota, these centers are committed to providing "innovative approaches to improving the practice of career and technical education at local, state, and national levels leading to improved student achievement." To this end, the centers work closely with practitioners and policymakers in career and technical education through a consortium. The 2002 National Leadership Institute http://www.nccte.org/programs/academy/institute/index.asp is one of many professional development activities and programs sponsored by the centers.

Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI)
http://www.mdcinc.org/rcci/
"The RCCI stresses economic development and access to education as concurrent goals because both are needed to have an impact on poverty in distressed rural regions." Having worked with 24 communities, the initiative has developed an extensive list of resources. It also has partnered with the University of Namibia to develop a new community-college-style campus.

U.S. News & World Report: Community College
http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/community/commcollhome.htm
In addition to a selection of articles from *U.S. News* concerning community colleges, this site has several useful interactive features: community college search, community college forum, scholarship search, grade calculators and a class scheduler. Guides to financial planning and admissions are also included.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

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